

StigmaBusters

Call to Action: Wristcutters (From *StigmaBusters Alert*, March 23, 2007, smarch@nami.org)

Unfortunately, another offensive—and dangerous—suicide marketing campaign is planned.

AfterDark Films will release a film this summer, Wristcutters: A Love Story. Described as "a dark romantic comedy." it will be distributed by Lionsgate Entertainment. The film premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2006 and has won some film festival awards. NAMI has not had an opportunity to view it, and makes no judgment at this time about its content or creative merit.

Beginning in April, however, AfterDark plans to launch an advertising campaign with cutouts of characters jumping off a bridge, electrocuting and hanging themselves. The signs will be placed on telephone poles and trees in major markets. "We just hope they don't cause too many accidents," AfterDark's managing partner, Courtney Solomon said. Never mind "suicide contagion," through which portrayals of suicide in the mass media stimulate an increase of "copycat suicides" by people in distress.

Recently, protests forced AfterDark to remove 30 billboards in Los Angeles promoting the release of another film *Captivity* which showed graphic images of women, being kidnapped, confined, tortured and killed. Solomon claimed the billboards had been put up by mistake.

On March 12, NAMI and 13 other national organizations signed a joint letter to AfterDark and Lionsgate, asking that the graphic suicide marketing campaign be dropped. So far there has been no response by AfterDark. Lionsgate claims they have nothing to do with marketing decisions.

Please contact both companies:

- Stop the Wristcutters suicide marketing campaign
- Research shows that portrayals of suicide in mass media generate "suicide contagion." The planned advertising campaign is recklessly indifferent to the risk of promoting real deaths.
- Images of suicide are cruel and offensive to people who have lost family or friends to suicide, or themselves survived suicide attempts.
- Share a short personal story about mental illness, suicide, or stigma

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Short handwritten notes sent by regular mail sometimes have a special impact, especially with Lionsgate. If emails to either company bounce back because the in-box is full, please consider calling. If voice mailboxes are full, consider sending a note. Overflowing mailboxes, means other StigmaBusters are also helping to make a difference. The more contact the better, from all directions! *Stella March, Stigmabusters Coordinator*